

## When The Mails Went Through Salt Lake On Horse Back



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Wednesday, April 11, 1860.

### The Pony Express.

The first Pony Express from the West left Sacramento city, Cal., at 12 p.m., on the night of the 3d inst., and arrived in this city at 11:45 p.m. of the 7th, inside of prospectus time. The roads were heavy and the weather stormy. The last 75 miles was made in 5 hours, 15 minutes, in a heavy rain.

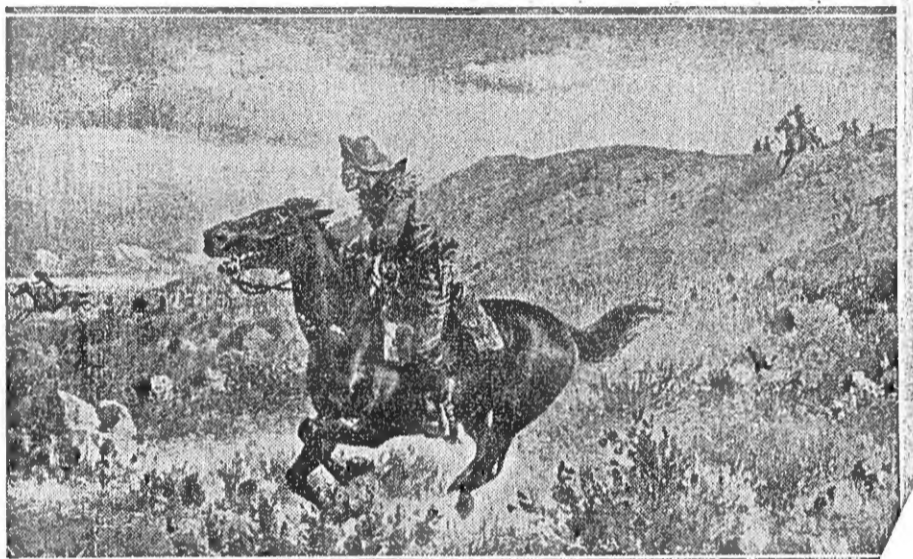
The Express from the East left St. Joseph, Missouri, at 6:30 p.m. on the evening of the 4th and arrived in this city at 6:25 p.m. on the evening of the 6th. The difference in time between St. Joseph and this city is something about 1 hour and 15 minutes, bringing us within six days communication with the frontier, and seven days from Washington—a result which we Unionists, accustomed to receive news three months after date, can well appreciate.

Much credit is due the enterprising and persevering originators of this enterprise and, although a telegraph is very desirable, we feel well satisfied with this achievement for the present.

The weather has been disagreeable and is stormy for the past week and in every way calculated to retard the operations of the company, and we are informed the express eastward from this place was five hours in going to Snyder's mill, a distance of twenty-five miles.

We are indebted to Mr. W. H. Russell for a copy of the St. Joseph Daily Gazette, printed expressly for Utah and California, with dates from Washington and New York to the evening of the 2d, and from St. Joseph to 6 p.m. of the 3d instant.

The probability is, the express will be a little behind time in reaching Sacramento this trip, but when the weather becomes settled, and the roads good, we have no doubt they will be able to make the trip in less than ten days.



Above is a typical Pony Express rider of the '60's, covering his run in the face of hostile Indian and bandit threats. At the left is the

account in The Desert News of April 11, 1860, of the first Pony Express run which occurred 74 years ago today.

## Pony Express Started 74 Years Ago Today

First Run Was Made From Sacramento to Salt Lake  
In Four Days; Line Lost \$150,000

Seventy-four years ago today, a buckskin-clad horseman spurred his pony eastward at a mad gallop. Strapped to his saddle was valuable mail from Sacramento, California, destined for eastern cities. Four days later that mail reached Salt Lake City.

Crowds were gathered in the streets as the foam-flecked horse threw mud from his flying heels. Rain beat into the rider's face. At the stage depot a fresh pony and a fresh rider were waiting. In less than ten seconds the saddle bags with their precious cargo of mail were transferred and the ride continued eastward, ever eastward.

That was the start of the Pony Express and an epochal event for Salt Lake and the west. It brought this city within six days of the eastern frontier and within seven days' communication with Washington, D. C. Previously the time was about three months.

### Complaint of Delays

Now messages flash over the same route in a fraction of a second and the trail is covered by airplane daily in a few hours.

In the '50's and '60's there were many complaints on the overland mail delays. First class mail often was left waiting at Fort Kearney or other points for months at a time. In many cases government reports were substituted for first class mail and caused further delays. Stage coach passengers likewise complained of the discomfort of riding with the interior of the coaches packed with useless government tomes.

Horace Greeley raised a particularly strident wail when he was forced to ride from Fort Laramie on a tripod formed by the corners of one patent office report and two of Hon. J. M. Bernhiesel's free public documents.

Then, also, California was becoming predominant in the nation's interest with immigration and gold. The officials in Washington wanted faster communication and so the Pony Express started on April 3, 1860.

### Lost \$150,000

The company of Russell, Wadell and Majors supplied the backing and provided horses and riders. Mail was carried for \$5 an ounce from Sacramento to St. Joseph, Mo.

Horses were changed every 12 or 16 miles and always were rid-